Reader- Response

*Out Of The Dust* is a book that fifth graders could benefit from. If the students are younger than fifth grade I would fear that they wouldn’t be able to hold interest in the book because they wouldn’t fully understand being that most students learn about the dust bowl in the fifth grade. Also, the comprehension level and sympathy for others is greater in the fifth grade. I am not able to put myself in the shoes of Billie Jo because fortunately my father has always been a great part of my life and has always been there for my family and me. However, I remember being in the sixth grade and knowing some of my classmates who did not have their fathers present or were adopted.

I was unable to understand why a father would want to leave his family until I met my best friends and my whole perception changed. Renee and Reneasha were my best friends who were twins and were adopted. They had a younger sister named Renia and the three were extremely close. Renee and Reneasha had a peculiar that right off the bat I knew they weren’t from New York. This accent was a southern accent a more flavorful one. As I got to know the twins I learned that not only were they adopted but that they were one of five sisters and that they were from Mississippi. The oldest sisters lived in Mississippi and had families of their own but still kept in touch with Renee, Reneasha, and Renia. In fact the three visited their older sisters on long breaks and holidays. As I got closer to the twins they would inform me on secret files they had of their real parents because they could not get a hold of them until they turned 18. They constantly expressed that even though they lived in New York for three years they still missed home (Mississippi) and would rather be there.

I saw how not even the street hot dogs and lively music on Jerome ave wouldn’t change the minds of these girls. They were southern girls who loved chicken wings and hot sauce and every day they’d tell me “Daniella we are going home someday.” As much as they tried to get that Bronx groove on them they just weren’t able to fully give in. they were searching for home or a sense of home. But home was not in the city it was in the south with their older sisters. I often wondered why? Why an adoptive mother and not your own?

Just like Billie Jo, Renee, Reneasha, and Renia’s father abandoned them for another woman which left their mother distraught and began using drugs to the point where she was unable to take care of her younger three girls. The adoption agency took over and that’s how they ended up with Ms. Pococha in New York. Just like Billie Jo who ran away from home, these girls were taken away from home but they realize that their future lies back at home. They progressed in New York and thankfully Ms. Pacocha gave them a better home to grow up in but eventually they will go back and they will be reunited with their sisters and help their mother recuperate. I am able to understand the importance of knowing where you come from through my encounter with the twins.

Poetry is a way children learn to put thoughts and feelings onto paper without it being just words. Poetry puts the meaning into the story. Poetry also puts that sentimental value into one’s story. “If readers can visualize or otherwise concretize the situations that carefully chosen words describe, then the words will help them to create imaginary pictures or smells or sounds that can provide two kinds of pleasures: having the sensations evoked, and perceiving how the words evoke them” (Pleasures p. 261). Not only do the students get emotions from the poem but they also can create a storyline in their heads and therefore use imagination for the creation of the story. Poetry is a creative tool for the young mind to begin to exercise their writing abilities as well as reading.